

## Judgement Of Believers

Our salvation is two sided. First there is the kindred relationship with God, and then there is the fellowship with God. The two are fundamentally different. The moment you accepted Jesus, you became a child of God and part of the family of God. Galatians 3:26 says, "For in Christ Jesus you are sons of God through faith." God is now your Father and you are His child and you can not get out of that relationship. Once you are born again you are born into the family of God and He will always stand by you. That is the kindred relationship and nothing can break that relationship.

That is not true for the fellowship relationship with God. The fellowship is broken if you don't fellowship with God or if you have sin in your life. When we come to the judgement of the works of the believer, it is about the fellowship of the believer, not the kindred relationship. For example; your earthy father will always be your kindred father. You can change your name, appearance and location but your father will remain your father; just as God will always be your heavenly Father. However, if you have a disagreement with your earthy father and do not speak for a time, the kindred relationship remains the same but the fellowship with him is broken. God will always be your Father but through sin or lack of prayer, the fellowship is broken. Titus 3:5 says; 'He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but because of His own mercy, by the cleansing of new birth and renewing of the Holy Spirit'.

We can't earn our salvation through works and we must be born again. John 3:5 says; "Unless a man is born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." See 1 Corinthians 12:13 & 14. "For by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body made up of many parts." The moment you are born again, the Holy Spirit put you into the body of Christ.

In 2 Corinthians we read; 'Therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away and behold, all things have become new! You are renewed and made into a new creature the moment you are born again'. If you allow Jesus to wash you and cleanse away your sin and forgive you, you will have eternal life, but if you refuse to allow Jesus to wash you, you will be headed for judgement.

Fellowship with God needs constant attention, constant renewing by the Holy Spirit. Your sins were taken on the cross, judged and found guilty and paid for in full by the Lord Jesus. Since He paid for your sins in full, that means you can't pay for them, but we have a debt to serve God. Judgement does not come to the believer and no believer will ever be judged for sin but we will be judged by our works that we must do after salvation.

Roman 8:1 says; 'Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit'.

John 3:18 says; 'He that believes in Him is not judged (or condemned) but he who does not believe is condemned or judged already, because he has not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God'.

John 5:24 says; 'Truly I tell you; the person whose ears are open to My words and believes on Him Who sent Me has eternal life and he does not come into judgement but he has already passed over out of death into life'.

These scriptures show there is no judgement for the believer where sin is concerned. There is however, judgement for the believer where fellowship and works are concerned. Our relationship with the Father will be judged but not in the future after our death; it is right now in this life. 1 Corinthians 11:31 & 32 says; If we judge and examine ourselves we should not be judged, but when we fall short and are judged by the Lord we are disciplined and chastened, so that we may not be condemned with the world.

That is self judgement not judgement of one another. We have no right to judge another believer. Examine yourself. We must be harsher on ourselves than anyone else is as far as sin is concerned. Do not allow any sin in your life. Other people may not be aware of your sin but God knows about it. Nothing is hidden from Him. It is our responsibility to judge ourselves, so how do we do it? 1 John 1:9 & 10 tells us; 'If we freely admit that we have sinned and confess our sins; He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned we contradict His Word and His Word is not in us'.

God loathes sin and if we confess it then we are telling God we loathe sin too. Once we see there is sin, we must repent of it, stop doing it and be washed. The consequences of not confessing or recognising sin can be dire for us. Sin doesn't hurt God, He's bigger than that, but it hurts us and causes a rift or broken fellowship between you and your heavenly Father. Confessing, repenting and being cleansed reconciles us to God, and this can only be done through the blood sacrifice of Jesus.

Confessing and forgiveness goes on and on throughout our lives, and the more sin we deal with through self examination, the less God has to purge painfully. We need to ask the Holy Spirit what the sin is in our lives and He will reveal it bit by bit. We must be eager to have sin cleansed. We must be in the constant state of facing up to sin and having God deal with it. This is judging oneself. We must be in such deep fellowship with God, we can't bear to have the sin shatter that closeness of fellowship. The Lord can do what we can never do for ourselves; that is to give us a sense of purity, cleanness and peace. We battle with sin every day because we have the sin nature that is always there.

Paul the Apostle battled ferociously with the sin nature within him. See in Romans 7:22 to 25; "I delight in the law of God in my innermost self, but I discern in my body a different law at war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner to the law of sin that dwells in me. O unhappy, pitiable and wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? O thank God He will, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then indeed I, of myself with the heart, serve the Law of God but with the flesh serve the law of sin."

God cannot walk with a believer if that person accepts sin as being normal. We must cleanse sin away in order to have a close relationship with God. Our lives should be as David wrote in Psalm 51:17; 'My sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart (broken down with sorrow for sin and humbly and thoroughly penitent) such, O Lord You will not despise'.

Not a proud heart; not a heart self righteously vindicating itself, but a heart that accepts that what God says is true and says, "I'm sorry Lord. I don't want it like that. Please by Your Spirit, enable me to walk uprightly so I don't walk in sin." People like this will never criticise sin in others because they are too conscious of their own sin. Occasionally in humility we must point out sin to another, but you must have the attitude, "There, but for the grace of God go I."

If you hold on to the attitude, that what you are doing is not sin and refuse to admit, confess or bow the knee to God, there is a penalty. 1 Corinthians 11:32 shows the penalty if we refuse to judge ourselves. People don't usually like to talk about God's discipline and like to 'over spiritualise' everything, instead of facing up to, and dealing with, the sin in their lives. God disciplines and the Bible states it very clearly. God doesn't want us hiding sin. We must face up to it and confess it. God already knows all about it, but He wants us to see it and own up to it. Sin in our lives is a family matter because God is our Father. By the grace of God we are cleansed.

1 John 2:1 & 2 says; 'I write to you these things so that you may not violate God's law and sin. But if anyone should sin, we have an Advocate (or One Who will intercede for us) with the Father, Who is Jesus Christ and He is the Propitiation (or the atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours alone but also for the sins of the whole world'.

God waits for us to confess our sins by His grace. He never forgets sin until it is confessed, then it is forgiven then forgotten. But if you don't confess your sins, the chastening gets worse and worse until you are forced to stop. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23 to 32. These people took communion unworthily and brought judgement on themselves. Some of these people were ill and some actually died as a result of their sin, so we can see that unconfessed sin brings judgement on oneself. Note: sickness is not always a result of sin and neither is death. We must, however, come into fellowship with God, and ask the Holy Spirit to convict us of every sin we can think of, and every sin we can't think of. God will always discipline unconfessed sin, so we must get before the Lord and ask Him to show us our sin. It is very important. If we choose to hold onto sin, then we must accept God's discipline.

See Hebrews 12:5b to 11. 'Do not think it lightly or scorn to submit to the correction and discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage and give up when you are reproved and corrected by Him. For the Lord disciplines whom He loves, and He punishes - even scourges - every child whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes. You must submit to discipline, for God is dealing with you as His children. For what child is there whom their father does not train, correct and discipline? Now if you are exempt from correction and left without discipline - in which all of God's children share - then you are illegitimate offspring. We have had earthy fathers who disciplined us and we yielded to them, so shall we not much more, cheerfully submit to the Father of spirits, and so truly live? For our earthly fathers disciplined us and it seemed proper and good to them; but He disciplines us for our certain good, that we may become sharers in His own holiness. For the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems grievous and painful, but afterwards it yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it'.

So we can see that although we will never stand before God in judgement for our sins after we die, we are being judged and cleansed while we live on earth so when we die, only our works are judged and our rewards for obedience are given to us.

We can view the believer in three main ways; number one, as a sinner; number two, as a son; and number three, as a servant. For every believer, those three are true and all these three have judgement connected to them. Number one and two have been dealt with on these pages already so now let's look at number three; our works.

Our works have a judgement connected to them too, but this judgement is the only one in the future. The moment you are born again and become a believer and a son, you also become a servant. If your spiritual growth is correct you will start producing fruit. What does a servant do but wait on his Master? We are as believers, the ambassadors of Christ. The church is to represent Christ; He has no other workers. Every believer has a duty to serve the Lord, and your production is going to be judged by the Lord. Every day we should be producing works. Production of works is described in Matthew 13:22 & 23 as fruit.

When and how is the judgement of our works going to happen and who is going to do it? The Lord Jesus is going to judge our works on the day of the first resurrection. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16b & 17 we read; 'those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first then we, the living ones who remain on the earth, shall simultaneously be caught up along with the resurrected dead in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air - and so always through the eternities of eternities we shall be with the Lord!'

See 2 Corinthians 5:10; 'for we must all appear and be revealed as we are before the Judgement Seat of Christ, so that each one may receive his reward according to what he has done in the body, whether good or worthless'.

We must stress; this judgement is not for sin, it is for works. The good works are the works of the Holy Spirit done through us and the worthless works are the things done in the flesh. A description of our best deeds, done in the flesh, are as it is written in Isaiah 64:6, like filthy rags or a polluted

garment. Those worthless deeds are the ones that will be discarded, and the only works for which we receive rewards are the ones done by the Holy Spirit through us.

1 Corinthians 3:11 to 15 says; 'For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is already laid, which is Jesus the Anointed One. If anyone builds on the foundation, whether it be with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw, the works of each one will become known, for the day will disclose and declare it, because it will be revealed with fire and the fire will test the worth of the work each person has done. If the work which any person had built on this Foundation survives, he will get his reward, but if any person's work is burned up under the test he will suffer the loss, losing his reward though he himself will be saved - but only as one who has passed through the fire'.

There is no other Foundation on which we can build. Jesus is the only one. The gold, silver and precious stones are an analogy for strength and are all enduring; the wood, hay and straw are an analogy for burnable or worthless works. The amount we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us is what really counts. The best works or 'gold' is leading people to the Lord. How do we know? Because it is for eternity and will not be burned up.

How does one produce for God? We need to be in right fellowship with God as it is written in Ephesians chapters 4 and 5. These two chapters deal with many sins that were being committed by the Ephesian church and they were being told to stop such behaviour by the Apostle Paul. In Ephesians 4:30 we are told not to grieve, vex, sadden or offend the Holy Spirit. In 1 Thessalonians 5:19 we are told not to quench, suppress or subdue the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a fire in us, though some Christians don't allow Him to be a fire in their bellies. Through shyness, lack of confidence or some such thing, we can quench the Fire in us. Once we let go and allow the Holy Spirit to work, we will be able to produce much fruit for the Lord and the best thing about that is; you will receive the reward for the good works. When we stand before Jesus on the day our works are judged, He will be handing out our rewards with the words, "Enter into My rest you good and faithful servant." We can read this for ourselves in Matthew 25:14 to 23 and again in Luke 19:13 to 19.

1 Corinthians 9:24 & 25 we read; 'Do you not know that in a race all runners compete but only one wins the prize? So run your race that you may lay hold of the prize and make it yours. Every athlete who goes into training conducts himself temperately and restricts himself in all things. They do it to win a wreath that will soon wither, but we do it to receive a crown of eternal blessedness that cannot wither'.

In 2 Timothy 4:8 we see that Paul was writing; 'Henceforth, there is laid up for me the victor's crown of righteousness for being right with God and doing right which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that Great Day - and not to me only but also to all those who have loved, yearned for and welcomed His appearing'. Paul had the same confidence we can have if we too keep the faith and walk uprightly and do good works. God sees all and will reward us in the end. Revelation 4:10 & 11 reads; 'The twenty four elders fall prostrate before Him Who is sitting on the throne, and they worship Him Who lives forever and ever, and they throw down their crowns before Him, crying out; "Worthy are You our Lord and God to receive glory and honour and power for You created all things; by Your will and for Your pleasure they were created."

Hebrews 10:23 says; so let us hold fast and retain without wavering, the hope we cherish and confess for He Who promised is faithful to His Word.

Amen and God bless you.

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